

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

RURAL

kids count POCKET GUIDE

Measures of Child Well-Being
in the Nation's Rural Areas



KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activity of the initiative is the publication of the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children. (This *Pocket Guide* is derived from the 2004 *KIDS COUNT Special Report: City & Rural KIDS COUNT Data Book*. For ordering information, see inside back cover.) The Foundation also funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed, community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

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INTRODUCTION

For more than 15 years, the KIDS COUNT initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation has produced data books filled with statistics reflecting the general well-being of children in each state. This *Pocket Guide* is designed to give state-level policymakers a better understanding of conditions faced by families in their rural communities and how they compare to those in the rural parts of other states, as well as the country as a whole.

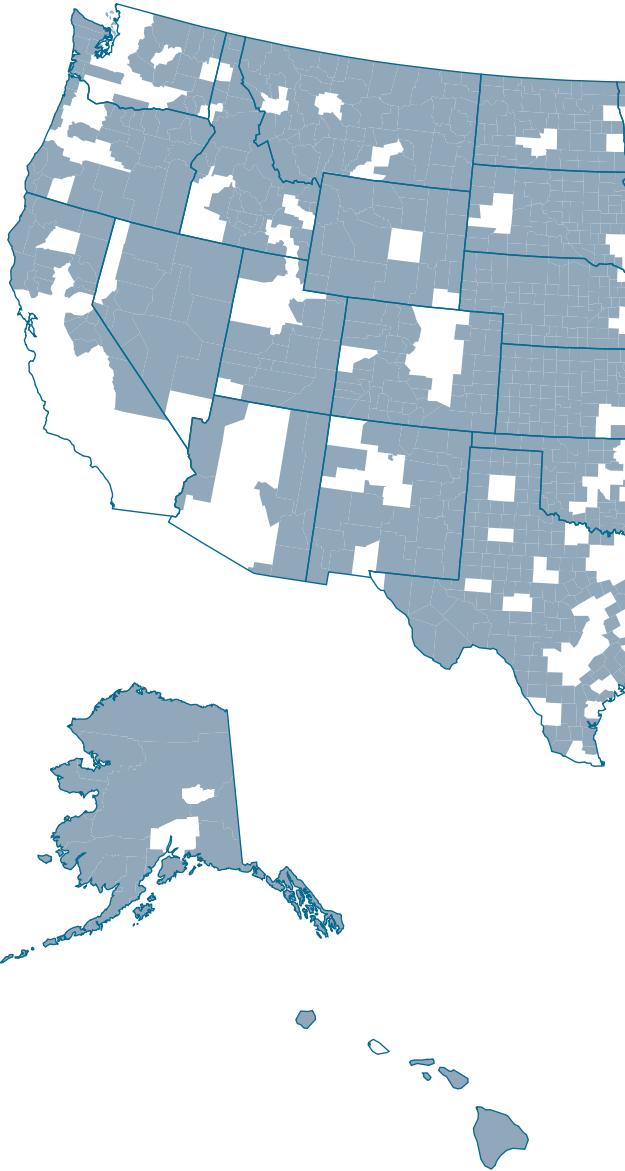
This special *KIDS COUNT Pocket Guide* provides the kind of detailed, objective data needed to track and monitor the well-being of children in the rural areas of every state. The measures presented here provide information on the following:

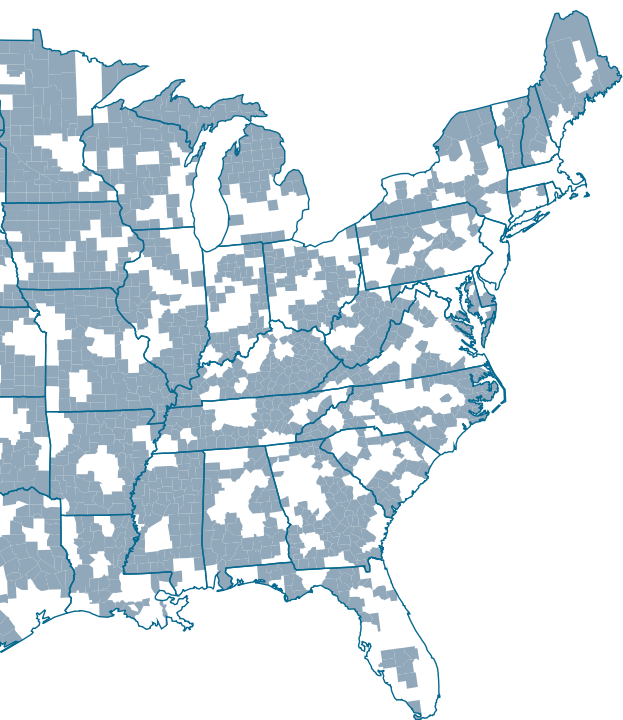
- Poverty
- Family structure
- Parental employment
- Housing affordability
- Education

The data show that too many children growing up in isolated rural communities, in every region of the country, do not have the supports they need to become successful workers, responsible parents, and engaged citizens.

Addressing—and resolving—issues facing disadvantaged children and families requires a combination of know-how, political will, and tangible resources. We hope that you will join us in seeking better futures for all of America's vulnerable children and youth.

Rural America





■ Rural counties—see definition page 4

Nearly two-thirds of the counties in the United States are rural, but less than one-fifth of the U.S. child population lives in rural America. Of the 50 poorest counties in the country, 48 are located in rural America.

DATA SOURCES AND DEFINITION OF RURAL AREAS

Data Sources

All of the statistics in this *Pocket Guide* are based on data from the 2000 Decennial Census. The Decennial Census has the major advantage of using the same questionnaire and methodology across the country, so that data are collected and measures are calculated consistently from one state to the next. Most of the data shown here were derived from tables published online by the U.S. Census Bureau, but five measures were obtained through special tabulations from the U.S. Census Bureau. Detailed definitions of the measures and descriptions of the data sources used in this *Pocket Guide* are in the PDF version of this report, available on the KIDS COUNT website (www.kidscount.org).

Definition of Rural Areas

Defining what constitutes a rural area or who lives in rural America is complicated and full of conceptual and measurement disagreements. Over time, many different definitions have been used by writers, researchers, and policymakers.

In this publication, we focus on people living in rural areas and small towns located outside federal government-designated metropolitan areas. This is sometimes referred to as the non-metropolitan population. This definition of rural is commonly used by researchers and government officials because it provides systematic identification of rural areas across the country.

In June 2003, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget implemented a new definition of metropolitan areas. The definition is county-based: An entire county is either inside or outside a metropolitan area. A metropolitan area has an urban core of at least 50,000 residents and comprises a core county and neighboring counties that are linked to the core county by commuting patterns.

Any county that is not inside a metropolitan area can be referred to as non-metropolitan. We included all non-metropolitan counties as rural in this *Pocket Guide*. In 2000, there were 2,052 non-metropolitan counties. Collectively, those non-metropolitan counties are home to 49 million people—approximately 17 percent of the total U.S. population.

Using this definition of rural, the states with the largest rural child populations are Texas (770,000), North Carolina (624,000), and Ohio (575,000). New Jersey, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia do not have any counties that are classified as non-metropolitan.

Indicators of Child Well-Being for America’s Rural Areas			
		Children living in poverty	
		PERCENT	RANK
The data shown in this table reflect the rural portion of each state.	United States	17	N.R.
	Rural United States	20	N.R.
	Alabama	24	37
	Alaska	15	15
	Arizona	30	45
	Arkansas	25	40
	California	21	32
	Colorado	15	15
	Connecticut	7	1
	Delaware	15	15
	Florida	24	37
	Georgia	25	40
	Hawaii	17	23
	Idaho	17	23
	Illinois	15	15
	Indiana	12	5
	Iowa	12	5
	Kansas	15	15
	Kentucky	28	43
	Louisiana	32	48
	Maine	16	21
	Maryland	14	11
	Massachusetts	8	2
	Michigan	13	9
	Minnesota	12	5
	Mississippi	31	47
	Missouri	21	32
	Montana	21	32
	Nebraska	14	11
	Nevada	12	5
	New Hampshire	9	3
	New Mexico	30	45
	New York	18	26
	North Carolina	20	29
	North Dakota	17	23
	Ohio	14	11
	Oklahoma	23	36
	Oregon	19	27
	Pennsylvania	15	15
	South Carolina	24	37
	South Dakota	22	35
	Tennessee	20	29
	Texas	25	40
	Utah	16	21
	Vermont	13	9
	Virginia	19	27
	Washington	20	29
	West Virginia	29	44
	Wisconsin	11	4
	Wyoming	14	11
NOTE: Data compiled by Kerri L. F. Detailed definitions of each measure New Jersey, Rhode Island, and the D N.A.=Data Not Available; N.R.=N			

Rural Counties with the Highest Percentage of Children Living in Single-Parent Families, Children Living in Families where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment, and Children Living with a Household Head who is a High School Dropout					
Children living in single-parent families		Children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment		Children living with a household head who is a high school dropout	
PERCENT	RANK	PERCENT	RANK	PERCENT	RANK
26	N.R.	32	N.R.	20	N.R.
25	N.R.	33	N.R.	20	N.R.
30	41	36	32	27	39
26	30	52	48	15	19
28	36	46	47	27	39
28	36	37	34	24	35
29	38	44	43	19	30
22	12	32	24	16	22
22	12	22	1	12	11
30	41	31	21	21	33
30	41	37	34	29	43
32	45	36	32	29	43
29	38	43	42	14	17
18	2	34	29	18	25
23	17	27	11	12	11
21	9	24	6	18	25
19	4	22	1	10	3
20	5	25	8	15	19
24	20	40	39	29	43
32	45	45	46	30	46
26	30	31	21	10	3
26	30	26	9	16	22
24	20	32	24	8	1
23	17	28	15	12	11
20	5	24	6	10	3
38	48	44	43	31	47
24	20	31	21	20	32
22	12	34	29	10	3
18	2	22	1	11	10
22	12	30	17	18	25
24	20	23	4	10	3
31	44	44	43	27	39
27	33	30	17	14	17
29	38	33	27	24	35
20	5	27	11	9	2
22	12	26	9	16	22
25	26	34	29	19	30
27	33	39	38	18	25
21	9	27	11	15	19
35	47	38	36	27	39
23	17	29	16	13	16
25	26	32	24	25	37
24	20	38	36	32	48
15	1	30	17	12	11
25	26	27	11	10	3
27	33	33	27	26	38
25	26	41	40	18	25
24	20	42	41	23	34
20	5	23	4	12	11
21	9	30	17	10	3

Rivers and Mark Mather, Population Reference Bureau, and Steve Smith, U.S. Census Bureau. Data shown here are in the PDF version of this publication, available at www.kidscount.org. District of Columbia are not included here because they have no counties that qualify as rural under the definition of rural used here. N.R. = Not Ranked.

Table 1.1: Percentage of children in low-income families, the share spending 30% or more of income on housing						
Of children in low-income families, the share spending 30% or more of income on housing		Children without a telephone at home		Children without a vehicle at home		
PERCENT	RANK	PERCENT	RANK	PERCENT	RANK	
61	N.R.	3	N.R.	8	N.R.	
48	N.R.	6	N.R.	5	N.R.	
48	22	8	40	6	35	
46	12	4	23	22	48	
45	9	18	48	7	42	
46	12	9	43	7	42	
63	45	3	13	5	25	
55	38	3	13	3	10	
69	47	1	2	3	10	
52	34	2	6	5	25	
51	32	6	32	5	25	
50	29	9	43	8	44	
68	46	3	13	4	22	
46	12	2	6	2	1	
47	19	5	27	3	10	
46	12	8	40	6	35	
42	6	2	6	3	10	
41	4	4	23	2	1	
47	19	9	43	6	35	
46	12	7	35	11	47	
54	36	1	2	3	10	
56	39	3	13	6	35	
N.A.	N.A.	Less than 0.5%	1	2	1	
49	24	4	23	3	10	
46	12	2	6	3	10	
49	24	10	46	10	45	
45	9	7	35	5	25	
50	29	4	23	3	10	
41	4	2	6	2	1	
54	36	3	13	3	10	
61	43	1	2	2	1	
42	6	11	47	5	25	
58	41	3	13	6	35	
53	35	5	27	6	35	
37	1	2	6	2	1	
49	24	6	32	5	25	
40	2	8	40	4	22	
57	40	3	13	3	10	
49	24	3	13	5	25	
51	32	7	35	10	45	
42	6	6	32	5	25	
49	24	5	27	4	22	
40	2	7	35	5	25	
47	19	5	27	2	1	
62	44	1	2	2	1	
48	22	5	27	5	25	
58	41	2	6	3	10	
46	12	7	35	6	35	
50	29	3	13	3	10	
45	9	3	13	2	1	

tion used in this report.

The KIDS COUNT State Network

The Annie E. Casey Foundation provides funding and technical assistance for a national network of KIDS COUNT projects in every state, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These projects, listed on the following pages, measure and report on the status of children at the state and local levels and use data to inform public debates and encourage public action to improve the lives of children.

The state KIDS COUNT projects publish a range of data-driven materials—state data books, special reports, issue briefs, and fact sheets—that help policymakers and citizens identify the needs of children and families and develop appropriate responses to address these needs. Much of the local-level data collected by the state KIDS COUNT grantees is available at www.kidscount.org/cliks.

For more information about the network of state KIDS COUNT grantees, please visit www.kidscount.org/contacts.

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